

FEDERAL MERIT SYSTEM
REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have worked with Senator DANIEL K. AKAKA (D-Hawaii), Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, on the "Federal Merit System Reauthorization Act," (the Act) which reauthorizes the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) and the Merit System's Protection Board (MSPB) for three years. The shorter reauthorization period will allow Congress to review OSC's and MSPB's implementation of the new provisions in the Act before being reauthorized for a longer period of time.

The Act provides that OSC prescribe regulations to establish responsible and professional standards for investigating complaints; maintain open and regular communications with complainants; establish an alternate dispute resolution office in the District of Columbia; and implement procedural changes to improve agency performance. The Act also establishes a process for external investigation by the President's Counsel on Integrity and Efficiency (PCIE) when an OSC employee files a complaint alleging wrongdoing by the Special Counsel or the deputy Special Counsel. The PCIE, established by Executive Order in 1992, was formed to address integrity, economy, and effectiveness issues that transcend individual Government agencies, and increase the professional and effectiveness of Inspector General Personnel throughout the Government.

In addition, the Act clarifies that employees filing an Individual Right of Action before the MSPB (bringing a case to the MSPB if OSC has not provided relief in 120 days) need to only identify the precise personnel actions being challenged in the initial complaint to OSC and that relief was not provided by OSC. The Act provides that a complainant can file an appeal to be considered on an expedited basis if an administrative law judge denies a request to suspend/delay the alleged retaliatory action. The Act outlines procedural changes MSPB must implement to improve agency performance.

While OSC and MSPB are required to submit annual reports to Congress on its activities, the Act increases reporting requirements for both agencies in addition to requiring OSC to survey individuals who make whistleblower disclosures to OSC.

Employee rights have been weakened under this Administration. The "Federal Merit System Reauthorization Act of 2007" sends a strong message that whistleblower protection and employee rights are key elements of the federal civil service merit system and must be enforced.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, on September 17, 2007, I missed votes because I

was traveling to be with my oldest daughter as she gave birth to her first child, my grandchild.

MOVEON PERSONAL ATTACK ON
GENERAL PATRAEUS INAPPROPRIATE

HON. JOHN J. HALL

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, General Petraeus is a good man and an excellent soldier, and the MoveOn advertisement's personal attack on the general was completely inappropriate. I respect the brave service, commitment and sacrifice of the men and women who wear the uniform and would never disparage them. It is disappointing that the general and the rest of our troops have been put in an impossible position by the failed policies of President Bush and I continue to believe the United States should wind down its involvement in Iraq, help bolster the Afghanistan government, and eliminate bin Laden and those who did attack us on September 11th.

SUPPORT FOR TAIWAN'S ADMIS-
SION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

HON. MIKE FERGUSON

OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to state my support for Taiwan's admission to the United Nations. Taiwan has been a sovereign state with a democratically-elected government since 1949 and it is only fair that they be allowed to represent their 23 million citizens in this international body. Taiwan has a steadily growing economy, a stable, democratically elected government and their own educational and legal system. They are a strong ally of the United States, and it is only right that we support them in their ongoing effort to gain U.N. membership.

THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FREEDOM TRAIN

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, it was 60 years ago on this date—September 16, 1947—that the Freedom Train appeared to start a special journey across the United States. Contained in the railcars of the "Spirit of 1776" were some of the documents that form America's foundation.

During a 16-month route that carried the Freedom Train to our contiguous 48 states at that time, millions of Americans saw the rolling museum visit communities large and small. It was a time when our Nation was reminding itself of the struggles that led to its formation as well as the struggles that had come in the decades just before in the form of the Great Depression and then World War II. It was also

a time during which railroads were able to showcase their still widely popular form of transit by leading a mission grounded in American pride.

The Freedom Train put more than 37,000 miles behind it during its nationwide tour. So many Americans were able to lay their eyes on original documents like the Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence and understand just how valuable those pieces of paper were to our country's place in history.

I extend special thanks today to my constituents, John and Mary Jayne Rowe of Covington, Virginia, for their tireless work to catalog the history of the Freedom Train for generations to come. I also ask that we pay honor to the few Marine guards who will meet a reunion in a few weeks to further remember their role in protecting the Freedom Train on its special trip across our great country.

INTRODUCTION OF PROTECT
AMERICANS FROM CRIMES ON
CRUISE SHIPS RESOLUTION

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Protect Americans from Crimes on Cruise Ships Resolution with many of my distinguished colleagues, including Representatives CHRIS SHAYS and CAROLYN MALONEY.

Madam Speaker, in 2007, over 12 million Americans will travel on cruise lines. Unfortunately, few of these vacationing "cruisers" fully appreciate their potential vulnerability to crime while on an ocean voyage. Citizens who are victimized often do not know their legal rights or who to contact for help in the immediate aftermath of the crime.

In recent years, the media has reported on a number of high profile cases of passengers falling overboard, passengers gone missing and passengers being raped and sexually assaulted. Sadly, many of these cases remain unresolved. Worse yet, many cases go unreported because there is no industry reporting mechanism.

My involvement in this issue began after a young woman from my district, Laurie Dishman, came to me for assistance after she had been a victim of a violent crime on a cruise ship. Laurie shared her shocking story with me in a letter one year ago.

As a passenger on board the *Vision of the Seas*, a ship operated by Royal Caribbean, Laurie was raped by a crew member. One of the most disturbing aspects of Laurie's case is that the cruise ship on which she was raped was short security staff. As a result, the cruise line promoted someone with no training to perform security personnel duties. If a real security guard had been aboard, Laurie may have been spared her awful ordeal. The tragedy that ensued is something that Laurie will never forget.

The story of her experience on the ship was shocking enough. Unfortunately, I soon learned that was only the beginning. Laurie wrote me to tell me she was having difficulty getting a response to her request for information about the incident from the cruise line. As I began looking into the matter, a number of red flags were raised regarding the handling of